

Drinking Water – Maryland's most precious resource!

Howard County Health Department, Bureau of Environmental Health recommends that anyone who obtains their water supply from a private well have their well water tested regularly. Although private well water can provide excellent quality drinking water, the water can also become tainted with bacteria and chemicals from unseen sources.

You are responsible for maintaining the safety of your drinking water supply.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TEST FOR?

Although it is impractical to test for all possible contaminants, two inexpensive tests can serve as indicators of the overall condition of your well:

- **Coliform Bacteria:** Coliform bacteria don't usually cause illness, but serve as an indicator that disease-causing organisms could get into your well.
- **Nitrate:** Nitrate passes very easily through soil to groundwater from sources such as fertilizers, septic systems and animal wastes.

WHEN SHOULD YOU HAVE YOUR WELL WATER TESTED?

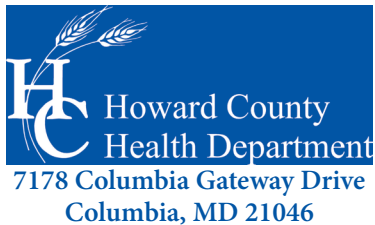
Generally, every 3 to 5 years, or:

- If a family member is experiencing recurrent gastrointestinal problems.
- Whenever you notice a change in taste or color of the water.
- After work on the well or if you notice that the cap is not secure.
- Prior to selection and installation of any treatment equipment.
- For nitrate, if you have a pregnant woman or newborn baby drinking the water.

To have your water tested, log onto <http://dhmd.state.md.us/labs> (click on Drinking Water Certification Program for a List of Water Quality Laboratories Certified in Maryland).

or contact Howard County Health Department at 410-313-1773 for assistance, www.hchealth.org.

Additional well information can be obtained at <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/water/>.



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*Should You Have Your
Well Water Tested?*